History of Sociology in Atlanta

Message from the Chair

Craig Calhoun, Social Science Research Council

The program for the ASA convention in Atlanta has a wide range of interesting sessions bearing on the history of sociology. Not surprisingly, I think some of the most interesting and important are part of our Section’s contribution to the program. As I wrote earlier in calling for papers, race has been among the most important themes shaping American sociology. Race has shaped the field through the enormous contributions made by African-American sociologists and other sociologists of color; by the studies of race they and others conducted; and by the practical engagements with issues of race that date back to Hull House and before. Race has shaped American sociology also by occasional blinders, limits, and compartmentalizations. The long relative neglect of the work of W.E.B. DuBois is only the most prominent of these. I am delighted that our Section is bringing more attention to this core theme, and that this is taking place in Atlanta, a city that has been prominent in this intersection of race and sociology in American history.

I am delighted also that we have been able to organize three sessions—not formally as a mini-conference, but with a great deal of coherence. This is due to cooperation with the ASA Program Committee and with Section member Erik Schneiderhan who was named to organize the regular program session on the History of Sociology (which always states “history of sociology” alongside “social thought” as though someone might object to including the work of thinkers who were not professional sociologists in the history of our field). Erik and I worked together to organize the submitted and invited papers into three sessions each of which we think is extremely interesting and the combination of which is an important contribution to the history of sociology. (We are grateful to the ASA for deciding at the last minute to make an exception to its rules and allow papers submitted to us but not through the ASA’s electronic submission system to be included—let this be a reminder to everyone for the future: the ASA has a system of formal procedures to which it tries to adhere strictly, but not always in the service of flexibility.)

As excited as Erik and I are about this program, I want to note some limits in the hopes that acknowledging them might serve as a call for additional work in the future. First, we are disappointed not to have received more submissions from women. This was not for lack of solicitation, but it still isn’t good. There are prominent female leaders in the history of sociology—some of whom have served as chairs of this Section, and happily women have recently won our graduate student award. But we

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Sessions

History of sociology in Atlanta

Section Meetings

Council Meeting
Tuesday, August 17
8:30 am to 9:30 am
Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Business Meeting (including awards presentation)
Tuesday, August 17
9:30 am to 10:10 am
Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Reception
Monday, August 16
6:30 pm to 8:10 pm
Hilton Atlanta

Monday, August 16

History of Sociology/Social Thought
8:30 am to 10:10 am
Hilton Atlanta

Presider & Discussant: Shamus Rahman Khan (Columbia University)
Organizer: Erik Schneiderhan (University of Toronto)

It is impossible to grasp the role of race in the making of American sociology without a deeper understanding of the role of American sociology in the making of race. The present discussion draws upon my work on the crystallization of the one-drop rule in order to explore the concrete ways in which, over the course of its history, the discipline of sociology has helped to create the very groups it would appear to merely study. Building in particular upon the insights of Pierre Bourdieu, it highlights the contributions made by American sociologists to (1) the hardening of the distinction between “blacks” and “whites” in the decades leading up to World War Two, (2) the postwar naturalization (and universalization) of the principle of hypo-descent, and (3) the attempts most recently on the part of advocates to bring into being a multiracial category.

Julian Go (Boston University), “Sociology’s Imperial Unconscious: The Emergence of American Sociology in the Context of Empire”

American sociology emerged as a discipline in the late nineteenth century, at the very same time that the United States was emerging as an imperial power, ruling peoples as far as Hawaii and the Philippines. While existing scholarship has explored relationships between European social science and European empires, this paper shows how the geopolitical context of empire impacted American sociology. The impact was direct, as early sociologists such as Edward Ross, Lester Ward, Franklin Giddings, and William I. Thomas pondered imperial questions and wove imperial narratives into their thinking. Issues of racial difference, wrought by imperialism and questions of colonial governance, were of special concern, shaping early sociological theorization and serving as important empirical referents. Early American sociology was not just about class conflict, industrialization, or even just immigration; it was also if not more so concerned with the geopolitics and socialities of imperialism.


This article examines the origins and trajectory of the political process model (PPM) in search of the basic assumption(s) that problematically influenced its development. Instead of asking “what” is wrong with the PPM, this paper asks “why” the PPM made the mistakes it did. I contend that the most fundamental and oft-criticized flaws in the PPM stem from a failure to sufficiently theorize race and racism. Because McAdam and others used Blacks’ anti-racism mobilization as the basis for developing and testing the political process model, theorizing how racism operated in the United States was necessary for their project. However, political process theorists failed to explicitly engage race theory. Consequently, the theorists and their model rely on the dominant framing of race in the United States, a frame racially biased in favor of whites. Therefore, a white racial bias is embedded in the political process model. This bias precipitated the major problems with the political process model by: 1) centralizing the state as the source of social inequality and the only institution that could create meaningful change; and 2) coloring scholars’ reading of Black insurgency, thus compromising the utility of major concepts within the political process model. I conclude by encouraging scholars to simultaneously

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theorize social movements per se and the axes of power (e.g., racism, heteronormativity) they confront as means for avoiding the shortcomings of the PPM.

Silvia Pedraza (University of Michigan), “Race in the Americas: American Sociology in the Making of Race”

Special Session: Black Folk and the Sociology of Knowledge: Re-writing the History of American Sociology

8:30 am to 10:10 am
Hilton Atlanta

Presider: Obie Clayton (Morehouse College)
Discussant: Thomas C. Calhoun (Jackson State University)
Organizer: Earl Wright (Texas Southern University)
David M. Ferguson (University of Chicago)
Zandria Felice Robinson (Northwestern University)
Earl Wright (Texas Southern University)

This session examines the contributions of Black sociologists and predominately Black institutions to the establishment and development of sociology in America. Consistent with the 2010 conference theme emphasizing inclusion, participation and social rights, the papers delivered in this session provide historical examinations of the social science research efforts of Black sociologists addressing social justice issues while simultaneously impacting the discipline in topical areas including the sociology of the south, urban sociology, research methods and theory. Moreover, the major theme of this session centers on the framing of the more than one hundred year sociological marginalization of early Black sociologists and departments of sociology at predominately Black institutions though the sociology of knowledge perspective that leads to conclusions, for example, supporting the idea that the first American school of sociology the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory (1895-1917), should be canonized with as much vigor as the vaunted Chicago School of Sociology (1915-1930).

Reception
6:30 pm to 8:10 pm
Hilton Atlanta

Tuesday, August 17

Council Meeting
8:30 am to 9:30 am
Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Business Meeting (including awards presentation)
9:30 am to 10:10 am
Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Invited Session: Race in the Making of American Sociology I
10:30 am to 12:10 pm
Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Organizer & Discussant: Craig Calhoun (Social Science Research Council)
Mathias Bös (University of Marburg), “Race and Ethnicity: The History of Two Concepts in American Sociology”

This paper explores the changing definitions of the terms race and ethnicity in American sociology. Based on a Du Boisian framework it reconstructs the sociological perception of ancestry-based macro group structures in four historical phases between 1920 and 2000. It shows that the theoretical discourse in American sociology like the public discourse American society starts out in the last century with idea that the American society is constituted by many races, than the perception moved to a Black and White dichotomy of races, and ended up with five racial or ethnic groups.

Elijah Anderson (Yale University), “The Philadelphia Negro in the History of Sociology”
Tukufu Zuberi (University of Pennsylvania), “The Two Phases of the Atlanta School of Sociology: The Propaganda of Sociology”

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Sessions

Continued

Sean Elias (Prairie View A&M University), “Drawing the Sociological Color Line”


Invited Session: Race in the Making of American Sociology II
12:30 pm to 2:10 pm
Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Organizer & Discussant: Craig Calhoun (Social Science Research Council)

Howard Winant (University of California-Santa Barbara), “The Synchronic and the Diachronic in the US Sociology of Race”


Stephen Steinberg (City University of New York-Queens and Graduate Center), “Civilizing the Primitive: From Robert Ezra Park to William Julius Wilson, from Tuskegee to the Harlem Children’s Zone”

With apologies to Levi-Strauss… Since George Fitzhugh embraced the term ‘sociology’ (1854) to justify slavery, nostalgia and romanticism has informed the racial right in sociology. Fitzhugh was the first self-identified ‘sociologist’ in the US; his heirs have been legion. While the origins of the racial left in sociology lie closer to us—in Du Bois most clearly—the egalitarian and inclusivist claims of the current he founded exhibit synchronicity as well. In the peculiar synchronicity that obtains in the sociology of race, everything happens at once; nothing is ever lost. So what are the diachronic elements, then? First, self-activity on the part of the racially subaltern, who periodically exhibit their mastery of ‘the art of not being governed.’ The second diachronic theme is rupture. In US history there have been only two ruptural moments, both tied to race: the civil war and its aftermath—Reconstruction—which as Du Bois saw, also heralded the eventual end of imperialism. The second was the civil rights movement, which launched both a new politics and a new sociology. The racial rupture of WWII and its aftermath has yet to be resolved in a new synthesis, a new racial hegemony. Until such a resolution of American (and indeed world) society’s ongoing racial conflicts can be imagined—something that is not now the case, despite the amazing fact of President Obama’s election—the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of the sociology of race will continue to make and remake the field.

Recent Publications

Articles, chapters and books on the history of sociology. Please send citations to Jeff Pooley (pooley@muhlenberg.edu).


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Recent Publications

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Membership News

Please send news items to Jeff Pooley (pooley@muhlenberg.edu).

Gary Alan Fine (Northwestern University), the Section’s chair-elect, has been named a 2010 Guggenheim Fellow.

Calls & Conferences

Please send calls & conference announcements to Jeff Pooley (pooley@muhlenberg.edu).


Chas Camic recently drew our attention to the desirability of more work on the history of specialist areas in sociology, and I strongly support that: we cannot know what has really been happening in the discipline without looking closer to the point of production and activity of most working sociologists. But there has been some work done on such history, if not always labelled as “history of sociology.” Where does one find such work? Four types of source, often not written by specialists in the history of sociology, seem salient. First is the celebration of anniversaries—of specialist journals, of sections, and of research units. We may regret that so much historical work is only generated by anniversaries, but what there is should not be neglected. (It provides data on the stories specialists tell about themselves, even if one questions the historical adequacy of those stories!) The unit of study may also be an individual specialist; festschriften are a fruitful source, and [auto]biographical material often throws some light on the subfields in which the individual worked. I have not checked through the considerable number of collections of autobiographical and reflexive pieces for examples, but they could repay collation of material from different volumes. Then there are places where units describe and boost themselves: the websites of some sections, and of departments which have had strengths in particular areas, make contributions here. (Edited collections from the Research Committees of the International Sociological Association, a number of which have been produced, are less boosterish but could come under the same head, and some of those appear below.) Lastly, there are general works such as national histories, and reference works such as encyclopedias, which often contain chapters or entries on particular specialisms. Each of these genres serves its purpose, but work generated in this way achieves somewhat accidental coverage, and does not necessarily meet the standards of what we would regard as good historical work.

As a contribution towards recognizing what there is, and perhaps suggesting where it could be taken further, examples that I have come across from some subfields are listed below. (This list is biased towards European authors, though some of those cases deal with transatlantic relations and are as much about the US work.) Maybe other members might like to add their examples to this list? To plot the scope of the literature is a step towards identifying areas where further work is needed, and towards comparison, critique, and synthesis that will help to make our historical picture more complete by taking it beyond what Chas Camic called “Sociology-at-Large.”

Some examples of work on the history of subfields:

**Health, Medicine**


**Work, Industrial**


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Kaufman, Bruce E. (1993), The origins and evolution of the field of industrial relations in the United States, ILR Press.


Education


Deviance, Criminology


Class, Stratification


Urban, Community


Macdonald, Sharon, Jeanette Edwards and Mike Savage eds. (2005), Sociological Review 53, special issue on community.


Platt, Jennifer (1971), Social research in Bethnal Green, Macmillan.


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General

The system

Abbott, Andrew (2001), Chaos of disciplines (especially ch. 4), University of Chicago Press.


Collections of examples

Archer, Margaret S. ed. (1974), Current research in sociology, Mouton.


Quah, Stella and Arnaud Sales (2000), The international handbook of sociology, Sage.


Current Sociology, 1952-1999 [for this period each issue had “trend reports” or collections of papers on related topics, many of the topics corresponding to specialisms].

Annual Review of Sociology [its issues since 1975 frequently contain somewhat historical papers, or snapshot papers may be on recurring topics that allow historical comparison].

HoS Has a New Website

Adjust your bookmarks. The Section’s website has in recent years been generously hosted by Mount Holyoke College. The new, updated website is now hosted on a shared server, at www.historyofsociology.org

The new site was made with WordPress, the open-source blogging software—mainly because its user-friendly administrative interface makes site updating easy even for web novices. Please send feedback and suggestions—cosmetic and/or substantive—to Jeff Pooley, pooley@muhlenberg.edu.
should still be concerned to make the Section as diverse as possible. Second, the same goes for engagement of scholars focused on Asian Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and the intersection of race with ethnicity. These themes (and authors) aren’t absent, but they are under-represented. This reflects the centrality of the African-American experience and struggles to American sociology, but this needs to be balanced with broader representation. Third, the famous dominate the history of sociology. This isn’t surprising, but it does mean that we will have a skewed understanding unless we make an effort to look at the field as a whole, including not only members who weren’t leaders but leaders who took their followers down paths that now seem dead ends.

These caveats noted, there are a range of terrific papers in our sessions. I should acknowledge that while Erik recruited one of sociology’s leading younger scholars as a discussant, I decided to include five rather than four papers in each session since there were so many good submissions. I have no doubt that there will be active discussion, and that many of you will lead it, raising questions from the floor.

As important as formal presentations are, our Section has two other important ways of coming together during the ASA meeting. I reflect my personal taste when I say that drinking together is generally more fun than discussing official procedures, but both the business meeting and the reception are important. The Council will meet at 8:30 am Tuesday the 17th, followed by the business meeting for the whole membership at 9:30. We will enliven the business by congratulating the winners of our Section awards. Please come. The Section reception is the evening before, Monday the 16th, at 6:30 pm in the Hilton. I have taken the liberty of arranging to have free wine and beer as well as bread and cheese. I hope none of you regard the cash bar as a matter of sacred tradition. I also hope you will excuse the fact that I secured the subsidy by arranging to have copies of a new (but not inappropriate) book on display, Robert K. Merton: Sociology of Science and Sociology as Science (Columbia University Press, 2010). Don’t worry; there will be no long speeches even though the editor has something of a reputation for burdening his colleagues with those.

Both the business meeting and the reception will be occasions for congratulating winners not only of our awards but also of our elections. I am pleased to announce that our incoming Chair-Elect is George Ritzer of the University of Maryland. Our new Council members are Vera Zolberg, New School for Social Research, Neil McLaughlin, McMaster University, and Marcus Hunter, Northwestern University (as student representative).

Last but not least, may I please exhort you: we have an outstanding new chair, Gary Fine, who deserves your support. We have a membership that has just crested over 300; let’s keep it growing. In addition, we have an urgent need: due to illness, the elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Section was not able to take office. There has been confusion about how to proceed. There need a volunteer now!

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The purpose of the Section on the History of Sociology is to provide a forum for sociologists and other scholars interested in the study of the historically specific processes shaping the development of sociology as a profession, an academic discipline, an organization, a community, and an intellectual endeavor. The Section serves its members as a structure 1) to disseminate information of professional interest, 2) to assist in the exchange of ideas and the search for research collaborators, 3) to obtain information about the location of archival materials, 4) to support efforts to expand such research resources and to preserve documents important to the history of sociology, and 5) to ensure that the scholarship of this group can be shared with the profession through programming at both regional and national meetings.
The Section

Awards

Section prizes, 2010

Congratulations to this year’s winners! Thanks to all those who served on the three award selection subcommittees, with special thanks to Gary Alan Fine for coordinating the award process.

Lifetime Achievement Award
John Galliher, Department of Sociology, University of Missouri

Distinguished Scholarly Publication Award
Filipe Carreira da Silva, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, for Mead and Modernity: Science, Selfhood, and Democratic Politics

Graduate Student Paper Award

Election Results

Section elections for 2010-2011

Congratulations to those elected, and thanks to all those who showed their commitment to the Section by their preparedness to stand.

Chair-Elect
George Ritzer, University of Maryland

Council Members
Vera Zolberg, New School for Social Research
Neil McLaughlin, McMaster University

Student Representative
Marcus Hunter, Northwestern University
Section Officers 2009-2010

Chair
Craig Calhoun, SSRC

Chair Elect
Gary Alan Fine, Northwestern University

Past Chair
Charles Camic, Northwestern University

Secretary-Treasurer
Jeff Pooley (acting), Muhlenberg College

Council
Matteo Bortolini, Università di Padova
Kay Richards Broschart, Hollins University

Ken B. Anderson, UC Santa Barbara
Anthony J. Blasi, Tennessee State

Past Chair
Charles Camic, Northwestern University

Kristin Haltinner, University of Minnesota

Secretary-Treasurer
Jeff Pooley (acting), Muhlenberg College

Richard Swedberg, Cornell University

Student Representatives
Michelle Marie Christian, Duke University
Kristin Haltinner, University of Minnesota

Section Committees 2009-2010

Distinguished Scholarly Publication Selection Committee
Anthony J. Blasi, Tennessee State (Chair)
Omar Lizardo, Notre Dame
Laura Stark, Wesleyan

Lifetime Achievement Selection Committee
Gary Alan Fine, Northwestern (Chair)
Ira Cohen, Rutgers
Priscilla Ferguson, Columbia
Peter Kivisto, Augustana College
Doyle McCarthy, Fordham University

Graduate Student Prize Selection Committee
Michelle Marie Christian, Duke (Chair)
Kristen Haltinen, Minnesota
Jonathan Imber, Wellesley
Jan Marontate, Simon Fraser

Nominations Committee
Charles Camic, Northwestern (Chair)
Michelle Marie Christian, Duke
Richard Swedberg, Cornell